

**Mulberry Bush
Killearn
G63 9NJ
Stirling Council
9 January 2008**

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act, 2001, requires that the Care Commission inspect all care services covered by the Act every year to monitor the quality of care provided. In accordance with the Act, the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education carry out integrated inspections of the quality of care and education. In doing this, inspection teams take account of *National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, and The Child at the Centre*. The following standards and related quality indicators were used in the recent inspection.

National Care Standard	Child at the Centre Quality Indicator
Standard 4 – Engaging With Children Standard 5 – Quality of Experience	Staff/child interaction Structure of the curriculum Children’s progress and development and learning through play
Standard 6 – Support and Development	Meeting children’s needs and care routines Partnership with parents
Standard 14 – Well-managed Service	Leadership and Self-evaluation

Evaluations made using HMIE quality indicators use the following scale, and these words are used in the report to describe the team’s judgements:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths, some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Reports contain Recommendations which are intended to support improvements in the quality of service.

Any Requirements refer to actions which must be taken by service providers to ensure that regulations are met and there is compliance with relevant legislation. In these cases the regulation(s) to which requirements refer will be noted clearly and timescales given.

Introduction

Mulberry Bush was inspected in September 2007 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. The nursery catered for pre-school children aged three months to five years. It was registered for 76 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 80.

Key strengths

- High-quality relationships throughout the nursery.
- Very good learning experiences for all children across the curriculum.
- An effective staff team ably led by the committed manager.

How good is the quality of children's experience?

Standard 4 & 5

Staff working with children under two were sensitive and thoughtful. They had created a nurturing environment which was enhanced by warm interactions with children. Staff respected the individual needs and routines of the youngest children. They were currently improving their communications with parents.

Children aged two to three played within the larger playroom which catered for children up to five years. Their needs were met effectively by dedicated staff and an appropriate curriculum. Children were making very good progress in all aspects of their development and had made friendships with older children.

Staff working with children aged three to five were enthusiastic. They interacted effectively to encourage children to be active in their learning both inside and outdoors. They used questioning skilfully to encourage children to think for themselves and share their ideas. Staff made good use of assessment information to plan for learning. They regularly consulted with children and took account of their interests. Staff recorded children's next steps in learning, but had yet to develop a systematic approach to using this information in planning for all children's development.

Children took part enthusiastically in a wide range of activities and were making very good progress across all areas of the curriculum. They had developed close relationships with, and purposefully supported, each other throughout their play. Children cooperated very well together to solve problems, and used their initiative when independently selecting resources. Almost all children were highly motivated in their learning throughout the session, particularly whilst outdoors. They had grown their own vegetables and developed links with the local garden centre. They photographed themselves with a digital camera and used these to enhance their own profiles. They painted, created collages and expressed their ideas through drawing. Children played musical instruments both indoors and outside where they explored sound and rhythm on tuned and percussion instruments. All children regularly took part in energetic activity. They used the large outdoor space to run around, climb and slide. They had very good control of the fine movements of their hands and were able to control pencils and small puzzles.

Children were making very good progress in communication and language. They spoke with confidence and used descriptive vocabulary to express their ideas. They listened well to staff and each other. Children readily used books to find out more information about animals and to enjoy a familiar story. They used their skills in early writing to make books about the weather and themselves.

Children were making very good progress in early mathematics. Staff had embedded the language of mathematics in their interactions with children who had extensive opportunities to develop their skills. They were able to match and sort, compare simple weights, identify coins and count with confidence.

How well are children supported?

Standard 6

Staff had created a warm and welcoming ethos, and provided very good support to children and their families. They had recently developed a new bright reception area which enabled them to display helpful information and photographs. Families were encouraged to share their skills within the playroom where possible. Staff communicated information informally on a daily basis with families, and provided more formal opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress during the year. Those parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very happy with all aspects of the nursery. Staff were fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in the protection of children.

Staff had effective arrangements in place to support children as they entered nursery and to ease their transition between the playrooms. Good relationships had been fostered with local schools where receiving teachers visited the nursery. Staff had implemented appropriate policies and procedures to support children who required additional assistance with their learning. Effective plans had been written and reviewed with parents and relevant outside agencies.

Leading and improving the centre

Standard 14

The leadership of the nursery was very good. The manager was an effective communicator and had fostered close relationships with both families and staff. She was knowledgeable and had created an ethos of learning amongst the children and staff. The manager had the support of an experienced management team. Together they had developed well-organised systems to manage all aspects of the nursery and support staff.

Staff were highly motivated and worked effectively together as a team. All had taken part in professional review and regularly attended training to enhance their skills. They had all recently completed training on communication skills. All staff were fully aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and registration was underway.

Self-evaluation of the nursery was very good. It was systematic and inclusive. The manager regularly monitored playroom practice and provided helpful written feedback. Staff frequently reviewed their practice and celebrated achievements, including the receipt of an external award. An improvement plan was in place and reflected priorities from both staff and families.

Issues from previous inspections

Response to recommendations or to requirements or enforcement action made at previous inspection.

At the last Care Commission singleton inspection there were four recommendations and no requirements. All have been met.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should further improve the consistency with which they record and take forward next steps in children's learning.

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this centre, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The centre and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority, working with the centre, will provide a progress report to parents.

Shona E.S. Taylor
HM Inspectorate of Education

Patricia Bunyan
Care Commission

HOW TO CONTACT US

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